

Flax is the oldest fiber in human history, dating back more than 34,000 years. It arrived in the Colonies in the early 1600s and was grown widely for export a century later. Most farm families relied on flax to make linen for clothing and textiles. David and his sons sowed flaxseed in their fields in April and harvested it in summer, or when the leaves had yellowed and the seeds turned brown.

Flaxseed *Linum usitatissimum*

Try this! - Brew a cup of tea with the leaves of bee balm, lemon balm and sage and steep in white wine, garnish with lemon slices.

Bee balm flowers provide an abundant source of nectar for hummingbirds, butterflies and bees. its crimson blooms from June through August and Bee balm blooms from June through August and soothe a colicky baby or to treat fevers and colds. may also have brewed bee balm as a black tea to be preferred by many to the tea of China. She Jane could make a delightful tea that was said to Oswego Tea. By infusing the leaves of bee balm, upstate New York, hence its other name, colonists by the Oswego Indian tribe in bergamot orange. It was introduced to its fragrance is like that of a also called Bergamot, because



Bee Balm *Monarda didyma*

Uses: Medicinal and Culinary

A Colonial Woman’s Garden

Inspired by Jane Ogden’s Dooryard Garden



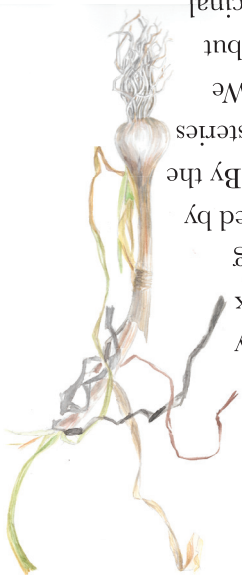
THE OGDEN HOUSE
1520 BRONSON ROAD | FAIRFIELD, CT 06824

National Register of Historic Places

Supported by



and as cloves to be placed in the ears to prevent deafness. treat the “vapours” and women’s “nervous disorders,” as a syrup to help with pulmonary problems, as a pill to purposes. Some widely accepted treatments used garlic Jane would have used it strictly for medicinal think of garlic today as a culinary herb, but



Garlic *Allium sativum*

Uses: Medicinal

Ogden House Linens - Linen was so valuable in early America that it was passed down to several generations. At his death in 1775, David Ogden’s estate listed 3 coats, 2 jackets, 4 vests, 4 breeches, 2 trousers, 2 pairs of stockings, 5 coverlets, 3 quilts, 8 blankets, 2 “huckerbak” window curtains, 8 tablecloths, 5 napkins, 13 towels and 26 pairs of sheets!

After pulling and drying the plants, they removed the seeds for next year’s crop and to make linseed oil. The stalks were soaked in a pond or stream to separate the tough fibers from the straw. The rough fibers were cleaned and smoothed with a “scutching board” and knife, and the fibers were then pulled through a series of combs to make a silken linen thread for weaving.

herbs were believed to have healing properties. These herbs, called “simples,” were used alone or in combinations to cure her family’s ills.

Jane grew culinary herbs to season savory dishes of meats or vegetables, as well as to flavor sweet jams or pies. She also hung fragrant herbs from her eaves or strewed them about the kitchen floor to disguise cooking odors or repel insects. She boiled natural dye plants, like yarrow or false indigo, in large pots in her dooryard and used them to color the linen and wool yarn spun by hand.

Today, there are more than 60 plants and herbs growing in the Ogden House dooryard garden. Each has been carefully researched and documented to have grown in New England during the Colonial period. Included here are profiles of several herbs with interesting uses, as well as a full plant list and garden map to show their current location. We hope this information will inspire you to grow herbs in your own gardens and that you will visit Ogden House and share in its beauty and simplicity.



Ogden House gardens are open to the public year round but are at their best in May through September. Docent-led tours of the house are offered by the Fairfield Museum & History Center on Sundays from June to September between 1:00 - 4:00 PM. Please verify times and dates with the Museum at www.FairfieldHistory.org.

Special thanks to the following FGC Members:
Whitney Vose, Ogden House Champion
Gabrielle Guise, Historian
Stephanie Staunes, Garden Map
Keelin Kirt, House & Botanical Illustrations

Brochure by The Fairfield Garden Club
2019 New Members: Alli DiVincenzo,
Sherry Greer, Cindy Shanley, Leahkay White
Visit thefairfieldgardenclub.org

Try this! - Make a natural detergent by simmering the soapwort with distilled water for 15 minutes. Squeeze out cleanser for textiles or linen.

products.

a gentle cleansing ingredient in many skin care and other “itches.” Soapwort is still used today as the crushed roots of soapwort to treat poison ivy term for washerwoman. Jane may also have used “Latherwort” and “Bouncing Bet,” an English produce a soapy solution. Soapwort is also called the roots of the plant (which contain “saponin”) to sanitation. Jane would have boiled the leaves and part of cities to hide the bad smells from poor where it was planted along streets in the poorer brought the seeds of soapwort from England, delicate fabrics. Early colonists

Soapwort is a vigorous perennial used since the Middle Ages as a natural detergent for cleaning

Uses: Household

Soapwort *Soponarva officinalis*



Try this! - Grow your own garlic. Plant single cloves in the fall about 4-6 weeks before the ground freezes, and you will have full bulbs in the spring or early summer. Wait to pull the garlic when about half of its leaves are brown.

Jane Ogden

A Colonial Woman’s Garden

Jane Sturges was just 20 years old when she married David Ogden in 1750 and moved into their new home in the prosperous farming and shipping community of Fairfield, Connecticut. The house was a wedding gift from David’s father and would become home to three generations of Ogden children.

Today, the Ogden House is owned and operated by the Fairfield Museum and History Center and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its Colonial-inspired gardens were created by The Fairfield Garden Club (FGC) in 1935 and have been continuously maintained and updated by The Club’s dedicated members.

The Dooryard Garden

In the eighteenth century, colonial life was centered on the “dooryard” areas of the home. These open spaces between house and outbuildings were surrounded by animal pens, cowsheds, and gardens that provided most of the small-scale vegetables and herbs that the family relied upon.

Jane’s dooryard was vibrant and active, with her husband’s farm activities like hog butchering, dairying, and wood chopping taking up much of the expanse.

Jane’s gardens were separate, but also very near the house to ease planting and maintenance chores. They were enclosed by fences made of tree saplings, hedges, or boards nailed to cross supports to keep roaming animals at bay. Each garden was symmetrical, separated into planting blocks or raised beds, with paths of gravel, seashells, or compacted soil.

Selected Plants and Herbs

Jane grew small vegetables in her dooryard gardens. She also grew plants for use as dyes, pesticides, fragrance and medicinal purposes. Many Colonial

Jane’s Dooryard Garden Plant List

No.	Common Name	Latin name	Usage
2a	Apothecary Rose	Rosa gallica officinalis	M, C, F
1	Anise Hyssop	Agastache anethiodora	M, C, F
2b	Basil	Osimum basilicum	M, C, P
3	Bee Balm	Monarda didyma	M, C
4	Bluebottle	Centaureia cyanus	M
5	Blue Hyssop	Hyssopis officinalis	M, F
6	Borage	Borago officinalis	M, C
13	Costmary	Chrysanthemum balsamita	M, C, P
8a	German chamomile	Matricaria chamomilla	M
8b	Roman Chamomile	Chamaemelum nobile	M
9	Chives	Allium schoenoprasum	M, C, D, P
10	Clary Sage	Salvia sclera	M, F
12	Comfrey	Symphtytum officinalis	C
14	Currant	Ribes rubrum	M, C
7	Catmint	Nepeta cataria	M, F
11	Clove Pinks	Dianthus caryophyllus	C, F
15	Dyers Chamomile	Anthemis tinctoria	D
16	Elecampane	Inula helenium	M, D
17	False Dragonhead	Physostegia virginiana	M
18	False Indigo	Baptisia australis	M, C, D
19	Feverfew	Chrysanthemum parthenium	M, P
21	Foxglove	Digitalis purpurea	M
20	Flaxseed	Linum usitatissimum	M, H
22	Fullers Teasel	Dipsacus sativas	M, H
23	Garlic	Allium sativum	M
24	Good King Henry	Chenopodium bonus-henricus	C
25	Gooseberry	Ribes grossularia	M, C
26	Hops	Humulus lupulus	C
27	Horehound	Marrubium vulgare	M
28	Lady’s Mantle	Alchemilla vulgaris	M, D
29	Lamb’s Ear	Stachys byzantina	M
42a	Lavender Cotton	Santolina chamaecyparissus	M
30	Leeks	Allium ampeloprasum	C
31	Lemon Balm	Melissa officinalis	M, C, F, H
32a	Lovage	Levisticum officinalis	M, C
32b	Marigold Patula	Tagetes patula	P, D
33	Marjoram	Origanum majorana	C
34	Mint	Mentha spicata	M, C, P
35	Onions	Allium cepa	C
36a	Orris	Iris pallida	M, H
36b	Pennyroyal	Mentha pulegium	M, P
37a	Pot Marygold	Calendula officinalis	M, C, D
37b	Pumpkin	Curcubita maxima	C
38	Rosemary	Rosmarinus officinalis	M, C, F, P
39	Sage	Salvia officinalis	M, C
40	Salad Burnet	Sanguisorba minor	M, C
41	Salsify	Tragopogon porrifolius	M, C
42b	Scented Marigold	Tagetes tunuifolia	C, F, P
44c	Skirret	Sium sisarum	M, C
43	Soapwort	Saponaria officinalis	H
44a	Sorrel	Rumex acetosa	M, C, D
46	Summer Savory	Satureja hortensis	M, C
44b	Southernwood	Artemesia abrotanum	M, C
44d	Squash	Curcubita maxima	C
45	Strawberry	Fragaria virginiana	C, M
47a	Sweet Cicely	Myrrhis odorata	M, C
47b	Sweet William	Dianthus barbatus	H
49	Tarragon	Artemisia dracunculus	M, C
48	Tansy	Tanacetum vulgare	M, D
50	Thyme	Thymus vulgaris	M, C, F, P
51	Violet	Violet odorata	M, C, F
52	Wild Endive	Taraxacum officinalis	M
53	Winter Savory	Satureia montana	M, C
54	Wood Betony	Stachys officinalis	M
55	Wormwood	Artemisia absinthium	M, C, P
56	Yarrow	Achillea millefolium	M, D



Colonial Usage: F=FrAGRance
M=Medicinal P=Pesticide
C=Culinary D=Dye
H = Household

Garden Map by Stephanie Stavnes
Cover and Botanical Illustrations by Keelin Kirt

Lemon Balm Melissa officinalis

Uses: Medicinal, Culinary, FRAGRance and Household

Lemon balm is a bushy perennial whose use dates back over 2,000 years. The ancient Greeks and Romans used lemon balm medicinally, and by the Middle Ages, it was cultivated and used throughout Europe. Lemon balm arrived in North America with the early colonists and Jane would have used it as a tea to treat headaches, indigestion and nausea, and in potpourri and sachets for its delightful fragrance. She may also have grown lemon balm to attract honeybees and used it in jams and jellies as a replacement for lemons. According to folklore, this fragrant herb possesses special powers of healing, success and love, and can also be made into an incense carried to help the bearer find love.

Try this! - Freeze lemon balm leaves in an ice cube tray and use in your favorite beverage. You can also add fresh leaves to a vinaigrette with parsley and basil, or store chopped leaves in vegetable oil over the winter.

Mint Mentha spicata

Uses: Medicinal, Culinary and Pesticide

Mint, a perennial native to the Mediterranean region, has been known and used since the earliest of times for culinary and medicinal purposes and as an “herb of hospitality” to welcome guests. The British brought mint to America in the early 1600s, and it was growing wild in New England by 1672. Jane would have used mint to flavor her drinks and food as well as to treat

indigestion, nausea and vomiting. She may also have used mint to relieve the symptoms of bronchitis and colds and added it to wine to help neighboring women with childbirth. Used in posies “for students to oft smell,” mint was also believed to “quicken the brain.”

Try this! - Add mint to Greek yogurt and fresh strawberries for a refreshing treat. You can also make mint tea by tearing 5 - 10 big leaves, placing them in a cup, and “muddling” the leaves with the back of a wooden spoon. Pour boiling water over the leaves and let it steep for 5 - 10 minutes.

Thyme Thymus vulgaris

Uses: Medicinal, Culinary, FRAGRance and Pesticide

Thyme is an upright, woody perennial herb native to southern Europe. It was used in early Greece as incense to purify and perfume the temples. Thomas Jefferson recorded it in 1794 and it was known to have been purchased in the Washington market by his maître d’hôtel. Jane would have grown thyme as a flavoring for stews and meat, and as a strewing herb for fragrance. She may also have used thyme to treat headaches, melancholy, nightmares, gout and toothache. If grown near beehives, there is an old belief that the abundance of its flowers can predict the size of the year’s honey yield.

Try this! - Grow thyme as a foliage plant near the front of a flower border. Its creeping varieties can also be used as sturdy fillers between stones in garden pathways.